

Congressional and Public Affairs
Laura Reiser (202) 720-9113

FSIS ISSUES PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT FOR GROUND BEEF PRODUCTS DUE TO POSSIBLE *E. COLI* O157:H7 CONTAMINATION

WASHINGTON, Dec. 27, 2007 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is issuing a public health alert for approximately 14,800 pounds of ground beef products that may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7, that were produced by Texas American Food Service Corporation, a Fort Worth, Texas, establishment doing business as American Fresh Foods. This public health alert was initiated after a trailer containing the products was reported stolen by the company.

The consumer products subject to this public health alert include:

- 2-pound approximate weight packages of “73/27 GROUND BEEF” bearing a sell-by date of “12.30.07”
- 2-pound approximate weight packages of “80/20 GROUND BEEF CHUCK” bearing a sell-by date of “12.31.07”
- 1-pound approximate weight packages of “85/15 GROUND BEEF ROUND” bearing a sell-by date of “12.31.07”
- 1-pound approximate weight packages of “90/10 GROUND BEEF SIRLOIN” bearing a sell-by date of “12.31.07”
- 1-pound approximate weight packages of “96/04 EXTRA LEAN GROUND BEEF, 4% FAT” bearing a sell-by date of “12.31.07”

Each package label bears the establishment number “EST. 13116” inside the USDA mark of inspection and the company name “American Fresh Foods, Ft. Worth, TX 76102” below the nutrition information. Each package has a net weight of approximately 1 to 2 pounds.

Bulk product also subject to this health alert include:

- 40-pound “net wt.” box of “73/27 100% GROUND BEEF; REWORK MAP”
- 260-pound “net wt.” combo bin of “CHUCK 100% GROUND BEEF; REWORK MAP”
- 370-pound “net wt.” combo bin of “SIRLOIN 100% GROUND BEEF; REWORK”

Each bulk product label bears the establishment number “EST. 13116” inside the USDA mark of inspection as well as a date of “12-19-07” with the production information filled in by hand.

The consumer and bulk ground beef products were produced on

PREPARING GROUND BEEF FOR SAFE CONSUMPTION

**USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
1-888-MPHOTLINE or visit
www.fsis.usda.gov**

Although these products should be destroyed or the company notified, consumers preparing other ground beef products should heed the following advice.

Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat and poultry. Wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot, soapy water. Immediately clean spills.

Keep raw meat, fish and poultry away from other food that will not be cooked. Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, poultry and egg products and cooked foods.

Consumers should only eat ground beef or ground beef patties that have been cooked to a safe internal temperature of 160°F.

Color is NOT a reliable indicator that ground beef or ground beef patties have been cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria such as *E. coli* O157:H7.

The only way to be sure ground beef is cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria is to use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature.

Refrigerate raw meat and poultry within two hours after purchase or one hour if temperatures exceed 90°F. Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within two hours after cooking.

Dec. 19, 2007.

Consumers should check for these products in their homes and should NOT eat these products. Immediately contact the company if unopened packages are found and do NOT throw them away intact. Opened packages should be destroyed and immediately reported to the company at the number below.

Consumers and media with questions about the public health alert should contact the company's consumer toll-free hotline at 1-800-724-1136, beginning Friday, Dec. 28 at 9 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.

E. coli O157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration. The very young, seniors and persons with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness. No illnesses have been reported. Anyone concerned about illness should contact a physician.

Consumers with food safety questions can "Ask Karen," the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day at AskKaren.gov. The toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

#

NOTE: Access news releases and other information at FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.